

INCREASE IN HCV PREVALENCE AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN UKRAINE

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Background:

Worldwide, there is a considerable burden of HCV and HIV infections among people who inject drugs (PWID). In Ukraine, HIV/AIDS epidemic was driven by PWID from its onset. Despite HCV has higher virulence in comparison with HIV, HCV programs were implemented only as a part of HIV prevention efforts or as separate interventions with low coverage. HCV treatment remains unaffordable for majority of HCV-positive PWID. We examined trends of HCV and HCV/HIV co-infection prevalence among PWID in three latest rounds of national bio-behavioral surveillance (IBBS) in Ukraine.

Approach:

We performed secondary analysis of the PWID IBBS in 2013, 2015, and 2017. Each round was using respondent driven sampling, and was implemented in all regions of Ukraine. HCV prevalence was measured using single rapid test algorithms. Mantel-Haenszel test was used to assess significance of the trend.

Outcome:

Overall HCV and HIV/HCV prevalence have increased significantly over last five years (from 56.6 to 63.8%, $p < 0.001$ and from 14.8% to 18.5%, $p < 0.001$, respectively). Such trend was observed among male and female PWID and among those who reported using prevention services and those who didn't. Decreasing trend of HCV prevalence was observed among PWID younger 25 years (from 32.7% to 27.2%, $p < 0.001$). There were no significant changes in HIV/HCV trend for young PWID and in HCV and HIV/HCV trends for recent injectors.

Conclusion:

We have detected the significant increase of HCV and HCV/HIV trends. Increase in prevalence was observed among all subgroups of PWID, except young and recent injectors groups, where overall trend was either declining or not significant. Decline in HCV prevalence trend among young PWID may be a sign of the impact of prevention programs. At the same time, these programs should scale up HCV services, including support of PWID in HCV linkage to care.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Iana Sazonova and co-authors don't have conflicts of interest to present this data.